



Blueprint for Improving Facilities, Safety, and Security

Providing District 16 students and staff with the tools for success

Facilities Utilization Study Update March 22, 2005

Overview

- ◆ In March 2004, the District began an extensive process to review all of its facilities and their needs. A school-community Task Force has reviewed the architectural study and has toured all of the schools and facilities in the District.
- ◆ An architect has developed preliminary conceptual drawings that suggest how the District could consider addressing safety, security, and accessibility issues as well as additional classroom space. The conceptual structural ideas are flexible at this point, with plenty of room for discussion. Any selected to be part of the improvement plan would be in addition to deferred maintenance costs. To date, these drawings have been presented at a School Board and at a Facilities Task Force meeting.
- ◆ The Task Force is providing good feedback and its members are very supportive of the preliminary information. Most also feel District 16 needs to compare, aesthetically and in a welcoming fashion, with surrounding districts.
- ◆ The Task Force will begin a prioritization process on March 31.

The facilities utilization study will lead to the development of a 15-year Facilities Master Plan—that part of our Framework for the Future—that will identify and prepare for present and future needs of the district.

Long-range Solutions for our Aging Schools

The “newest” school in our district is 34 years old and the oldest are over 50 years old. All structures are in need of updated electrical wiring and heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems. Our roofs cover an area the size of over four city blocks, and much of this area is in need of work. Our facilities, like our homes that were built 30 to 50 years ago, need major attention. In some cases, total replacement of whole sections of buildings may need to be considered—now or in the future—based upon a 15-year Facilities Master Plan.

The architect’s plans address hundreds of deferred maintenance projects at each school. They also address safety, security, and accessibility issues as well as additional classroom space. The conceptual drawings are flexible and will definitely undergo changes as the work of the Task Force continues. Some examples:

- ◆ A little over \$50 million in costs have been identified for district-wide “deferred maintenance” projects which include replacement of unit ventilators in almost every classroom, replacement of all single pane windows and hollow metal frames, replacement of all remaining asbestos floor tiles, upgrade faucets and plumbing in elementary rooms and in restrooms.
- ◆ Additional deferred maintenance projects include upgrading electrical outlets and wiring, upgrading technology infrastructure and access, and upgrading telephones and intercoms. These are the types of projects necessary in all schools, in all 800,000 square feet of facilities that are 34 to 50 years old.
- ◆ Repair/replacement on much of the three-quarters of a million square feet of our buildings’ roofs.
- ◆ The Westwood site would obtain additional classroom space and could possibly have a common (elementary and middle school) entrance as well as an upgraded common lunchroom and learning spaces.
- ◆ Kenneth Hall and Westwood Elementary could address security issues by changing their front entrances and relocating their main offices to the new entrances.
- ◆ Woodcrest could have its wings (south end) joined at the rear of the building for security, accessibility, and the possible addition of classrooms.
- ◆ Park Terrace could see expansion and improvement in its lunch room and physical education facilities.
- ◆ Extensive parking lot and traffic flow improvements would promote increased safety at all schools.
- ◆ The oldest sections of the high school complex, in need of the most work, could be demolished and replaced, producing up-to-date multi-use classroom space. If the same were to happen with the adjacent District Offices, space could be provided for staff training and community meeting rooms, including an appropriate-sized School Board meeting room.
- ◆ Repair and upgrading of many of the schools’ tennis courts and athletic fields.

Ever-present Effect of Inflation

The last bond referendum, for \$28.8 million, was approved ten years ago (a school-community task force whittled this figure down from \$60 million in identified needs at the time). Today, based on inflationary increases over the last ten years, a bond referendum to do the same amount of work found in a \$28.8 million bond would cost \$45 million. Put another way, today it would cost \$90 million to complete a project that 10 years ago would have cost \$60 million.

Debt Comparisons, Preliminary Bond Issue Figures

◆ Based on a 2002-03 profile, the debt service (the amount of spending per student for facilities improvement costs) in District 16 was \$586. This compares to \$3,600 in Mahtomedi; \$7,300 in Richfield; \$2,600 in St. Francis, and \$1,100 in Centennial. The state average is \$1,416 (more than twice that of District 16).

- ◆ Significantly behind other districts' efforts to improve facilities, a \$75 million bond in District 16, for example, would bring it to the 2002-03 state average for debt service.
- ◆ If the Task Force and the District chose to include *all* deferred maintenance items, additional classrooms at the middle school, and a number of structural changes for security benefits as well, the cost of a future bond referendum could easily reach over \$75 million. For context, as much as \$100 million would be needed—now or in subsequent bond referendums—to fulfill a majority of the identified needs.
- ◆ Up to \$10 million in resources for curriculum and technology improvements would need to be included in the bond.

For context: preliminary bond estimates:

An admittedly sizeable future bond referendum would not necessarily produce a sizeable increase in local taxes, in part due to present debt service that is soon to be retired. The figures below are provided in order to give a context for the tax impact of a future bond referendum.

Note: A home's *assessed value* is the value, assessed by the county, that homeowners use to pay taxes. This is almost always *significantly* less than the *market value* or what homeowners would price their homes if they were to sell.

<i>Example:</i> \$60 million bond	Assessed Home Value	Monthly Tax Increase
	\$150,000	\$ 6
	\$250,000	\$10
	\$500,000	\$21

<i>Example:</i> \$75 million bond	Assessed Home Value	Monthly Tax Increase
	\$150,000	\$ 9
	\$250,000	\$15
	\$500,000	\$30

<i>Example:</i> \$90 million bond	Assessed Home Value	Monthly Tax Increase
	\$150,000	\$12
	\$250,000	\$20
	\$500,000	\$39

Mini-timeline: ■ A preliminary plan for improving the District's facilities, safety, and security will be presented to the School Board in May 2005. ■ Informational meetings will be held this spring and feedback sessions will take place throughout the fall. ■ The final plan will be provided to the School Board in December 2005, a "Review and Comment" will then be submitted to the Department of Education for its approval. ■ In January 2006, the School Board is expected to determine a date, bond amount, and the number of questions on the ballot. ■ An election date for a bond referendum will likely take place prior to spring break 2006.

Communication, Opportunities for Feedback

Parents, community members, students, and staff will have regular access to information relating to the facilities study. All are also encouraged to routinely visit the district website (see: "Blueprint for Improving Facilities, Safety, and Security") as the process progresses. Informational presentations and listening/feedback sessions for staff and the public will take place later this spring and throughout the fall. All are encouraged to continue to provide input to Dr. Don Helmstetter, superintendent, throughout the process. Feel free to e-mail comments and suggestions to him at dhelms@district16.org.